

SAUDI ARABIA | IN FOCUS

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November 17, 2009

FOREIGN RELATIONS

King Abdullah and French President Sarkozy hold talks in Riyadh

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and French President Nicolas Sarkozy held bilateral talks at the King's ranch in Al-Janadriyah on November 17. The leaders reviewed a wide range of issues, including efforts to achieve a fair and comprehensive peace in the region based on international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative.

SAUDI-U.S. RELATIONS

King Abdullah meets with CIA Director Panetta

King Abdullah received Leon E. Panetta, Director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, on November 15. The meeting was also attended by Chief of General Intelligence Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz, Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir and U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia James B. Smith.

Prince Khalid in Washington for joint meetings

Prince Khalid bin Sultan, Assistant Minister of Defense and Aviation for Military Affairs, arrived on November 15 in Washington, DC for the Strategic Joint Planning Committee (JPC) meeting. The JPC aims to enhance interaction between the Saudi and the U.S. militaries and to support the Kingdom's efforts to upgrade its military capabilities.

U.S. mayoral delegation visits Saudi Arabia

A U.S. mayoral delegation concluded its week-long visit to Saudi Arabia on November 12 during which they met with senior Saudi officials, business and community leaders.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi foreign aid increases dramatically

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs last week released foreign aid figures for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008. The Kingdom's foreign aid rose from \$2,185,636,160 in 2006 to \$5,662,784,391 in 2008, an increase of 159%.

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Kingdom signs agreement with UN for humanitarian aid in Pakistan

A delegation from the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) signed a number of agreements in Pakistan on November 10, including one with a United Nations representative for the disbursement of \$100 million to support internally displaced people in northern Pakistan. The SFD also signed a number of agreements with Pakistan for loans totaling \$380 million, including \$200 million in budget support for the Pakistani government, \$100 million to secure fertilizers from the Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) for agricultural usage, and \$80 million to finance the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower project.

Kingdom to finance regional medical center in Kenya

Minister of Finance Dr. Ibrahim Al-Assaf and Kenyan Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Uhuru Kenyatta signed on November 14 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, an agreement to finance the Pediatric Emergency Center (PEC) and Burns Management Center project at Kenya Hospital in Nairobi. The hospital will serve all countries of the region. The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the Saudi-East African Economic Forum.

IDB, FAO sign \$1 billion deal to aid poor nations

The Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) announced in Rome on November 15 a \$1 billion agreement to fund agricultural development programs in poor countries. The IDB will contribute \$1 billion from 2010 to 2012 to finance priority projects in 26 least-developed IDB member countries. The FAO will provide the necessary technical support for the formulation and implementation of the projects.

CULTURE

Saudi Embassy hosts event on Arabic diglossia

On November 17, the Saudi Embassy, in coordination with the Middle East Institute (MEI) hosted a panel discussion entitled "Sawtayn: Arabic Diglossia in Perspective." The Humanities Council of Washington, DC, also sponsored the event. The informative discussion addressed various perspectives on teaching and studying the Arabic language. Panelists included: Dr. Shukri Abed, Chairman of the Department of Languages and Regional Studies at MEI, Dr. Clarissa Burt, Associate Professor of Arabic Language, Literate and Culture at the U.S. Naval Academy, and Dr. Margaret Nydell, Professor of Arabic at Georgetown University's Foreign Service Institute.

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